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The Commonweal

May 18, 1951

THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S

The State and Human Freedom

EUGENE J. McCARTHY

AMERICA IN ITALY

A New Life For Old Calabria

SEAN O'FAOLAIN

Labor: the Counterrevolution

FRANCIS DOWNING

Volume LIV **15c** *Number 6*

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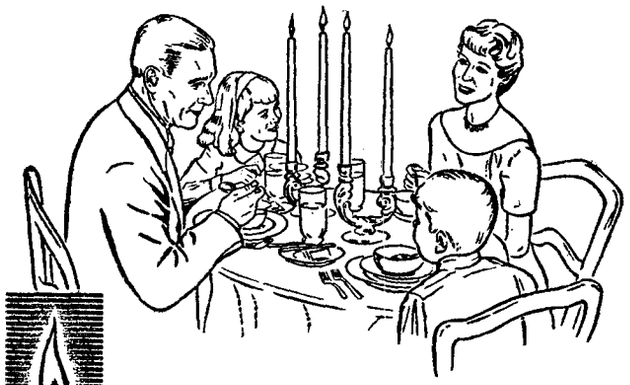

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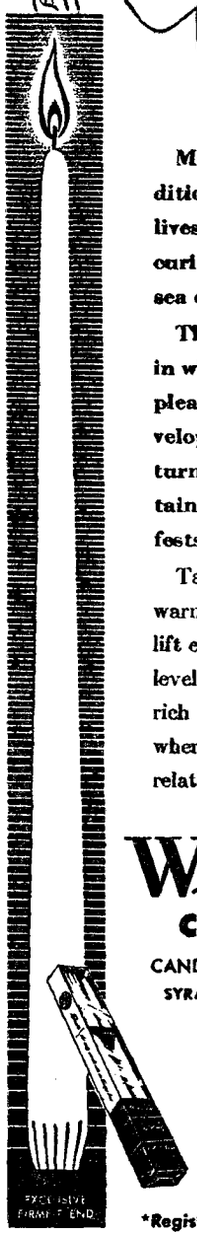

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

'Going It Alone'— And With No Map To Go By

AT ONE point in his testimony to the investigating committees of Congress, General MacArthur spoke of the long-standing desire of the Russians to expand to the Mediterranean Sea, and he said: "Whether you believe in the British or whether you do not, they were amazingly successful either on the field of battle in the utilization of the principle of the balance of power, or in combinations and leagues of various nations to prevent that tremendous [Russian] expansion. Without that, Russia could not dominate and control the world." What the General had reference to was, of course, the art of diplomatic and military maneuver Britain has practiced for many years in the Middle East, where, by manipulating and balancing the complex and conflicting interests of the many racial and political groups in the area, she has shrewdly managed to preserve a certain peace and stability there while protecting her oil supply and her Commonwealth lines of communication in the Suez. At the same time, Britain has denied Russia access to one of the richest and most strategic areas of the world, the Mediterranean, where three continents converge.

It is one of several paradoxes in General MacArthur's testimony that at the very moment he was giving Britain credit for the wisdom of this policy in the Middle East, that same policy was on the verge of a catastrophic collapse. In brief, the situation is this: since 1945, Britain, for reasons of economic weakness and political policy, has been withdrawing from her far-flung colonial holdings; nevertheless, even the non-colonial Labor Government has been convinced of the strategic necessity of keeping bases in the Middle East to protect Britain's economic blood—her oil supply, and hence her very security—and so after World War II the British set their hopes on the idea of establishing in the Middle East a friendly Arab league of states sympathetic to essential British interests in the region. However, a number of things occurred to frustrate this plan: the war in Palestine put Britain in a position of being unable to support the Arabs and as a consequence British-Arab relations became strained; the various Arab groups themselves, due to their intense inter-group rivalries, proved to be too unwieldy for the British to unite into a league; and finally, Arab and non-Arab nationalists throughout the Middle East were so bitterly set against old-time British imperialism that Britain had the greatest difficulty pursuing even her moderated designs in the area.

All of this has now culminated, within the last few days, in the seizure by Iranian nationalists of the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. There is a possibility that nationalists in nearby Iraq will do the same thing and some Egyptians are even talking of nationalizing the Suez Canal in order to force the British out. And, of course, the worst possibility of all is that the Iranian nationalists, who do not have the technical ability to run the refineries, may start dealing with the Russians. "We must clearly understand," says Anthony Eden, a veteran of Middle Eastern politics, "how much is at stake. The oil of the Middle East is indispensable to the economy of the free world. The output of Persia [Iran] is a third of the present total production in the Middle East. It would be a dangerous illusion to suppose that if the output of Persia fell to negligible proportions as a result of political action, the other sources would remain unaffected. Still less could a Persia unable to produce or market its oil be for long any kind of barrier against Communism." The whole British structure of security in the Middle East is, then, in peril; as a result, Russia stands to win from Britain in the Near East a cold-war victory second only to her victory over the United States and China in the Far East.

IF BRITAIN should lose the Middle East, her loss would be ours as much as hers, because it is an important part of our over-all strategy to prevent Russia from increasing her supply of oil, of which she is in desperate need if she

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wishes to wage a world war. We are trying to maintain world peace by making it clear to Russia that in the event of war, we would bomb the Middle Eastern oil fields and the vulnerable lines of communication from these fields to the Soviet Union to the point that Russia, for lack of oil, could not carry on a war against us. But if this strategy is to have any force, it is absolutely urgent that we build up our Atlantic and Mediterranean bases while we still have time. And if we do, the British will still have a chance to restore order in the Near East under this power-protection and thus avert the catastrophe that is plainly upon us in the Middle East.

And so, by a strange paradox, it is General MacArthur, an avowed admirer of British Middle Eastern strategy, who wants to involve us so deeply in China that the British-American position in the Near East would be instantly jeopardized and the prospect of world peace still further darkened. Can there be any wonder that Britain might be forced, under such circumstances, to let us "go it alone" in China, as the General has put it? In return, he asks us to believe, on his word alone, that air bombing and blockade can really defeat China—a very doubtful proposition in view of the fact that these methods might have no conclusive effects in a country like China—and that Russia will not come to the aid of her ally. "Suppose, General," said Senator McMahon, "you are wrong about that. You could be wrong about it, couldn't you?"

"Most assuredly," replied the General.

And then, it seems to us, Senator McMahon got down to the very heart of this whole matter. "You see, General, what I want to find out from you is this: That if you happen to be wrong this time and we go into all-out war, I want to find out how you propose in your own mind to defend the American nation against that war."

To which General MacArthur replied: "That doesn't happen to be my responsibility, Senator. My responsibilities were in the Pacific, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the various agencies of this Government are working day and night for an over-all solution to the global problem. Now I am not familiar with their studies. I haven't gone into it. I have been desperately occupied over on the other side of the world, and to discuss in detail things that I haven't even superficially touched doesn't contribute in any way, shape or manner to the information of this committee or anybody else."

General MacArthur is asking his countrymen to stake their security and that of the whole free world on the advice of a man who has no over-all strategy to offer, even though he readily admits that the struggle we are in is a "global problem."

• NEXT WEEK •

RAISSA MARITAIN reviews a new book by E. T. Dubois, *Portrait of Leon Bloy*.

"He had a passion for souls to the point of wanting to give his life for them. Except for that he had modest wishes: he loved the quiet of his home and of the church and the Latin language, and the reading of the Fathers. And he said—not without humor—'I like trees and the imperfect subjunctive, two things incomprehensible to the bourgeois.'"

Not Bread But a Stone

FIVE months have gone by since India asked this country for an emergency gift of two million tons of grain to be taken from our vast surpluses in order to avert a major famine. To date the United States has failed to act. It is three months since President Truman first asked Congress for the necessary appropriation. It took weeks for the foreign affairs committees of House and Senate to come up with their respective bills, embodying partial responses to the emergency. And at this late date of present writing, no bill to aid the hungering people of India has passed either house.

This would be bad enough if the tragic delay could be ascribed to our lumbering procedure of putting through legislation or to a general Congressional slowness of foot. But there is abundant evidence that the indifference of Congress to the plight of India's millions is deliberate. Washington has long resented Mr. Nehru's consistently neutralist position.

Opposition to the requested gift of surplus grain to India has been most adamant when things were going badly in Korea; the opposition has been there all along. To some Senators and Representatives India's plight seemed to present an unrivalled opportunity to drive a hard bargain on Indian manganese and other strategic materials vital to our own defense buildup. Others have insisted on American labelling and American supervision of the distribution of the grain.

This last has now led Mr. Nehru to all but forego American assistance if it is to be in terms that infringe on India's hard-won sovereignty. Apparently that was all that was needed for the House Rules Committee to postpone action even further. Senator Pat McCarran added to our woe

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by announcing that he would propose barring any surpluses' going to India as a gift. He also claimed that his colleagues, Styles Bridges and Homer Ferguson, supported his view that surplus grain going out to India would have to be paid for to the last dollar.

In what sense are the peoples of India responsible for this lamentable dispute? While politicians and statesmen wrangle, they are rapidly exhausting their last means of sustenance. In some areas, such as Northern Bihar, mothers are trying to keep their children alive with mud cakes, roots, herbs, snails and grass. There are also urgent cries for help from South India.

To what extent are the American people involved in this national disgrace? To begin with there is insufficient evidence that they have made their proverbially humanitarian sentiments felt in Washington. Here and there letters of protest have been printed in the papers. One American was widely photographed as he presented himself at the Indian Consulate in New York with a gift of a sack of grain. A number of student and religious groups are seeing what they can do to gather and dispatch rice and flour. The shameful failure of Congress to act does not correspond with the sentiments of millions of Americans of every religious persuasion.

If the United States is essentially so democratic that even our military policy is argued out in public, there must be ways of making the concern of millions of Americans for the peoples of India politically effective. Every citizen has the opportunity to write his Senators and his Representative. He can etch in his memory the names of such obstructionists as Clarence J. Brown and other members of the House Rules Committee. He can fix in his mind Senator McCarran and those who join him in opposing a gift to the hungry. Politicians who do not find the lives of millions of fellow-creatures a big enough stake can be reminded that all Asiatic and colonial peoples will be making up their minds about the United States (and the USSR) on the basis of what this nation does about India.

Moreover there are plentiful opportunities for personal action. CARE India food packages ($10; 20 Broad St., New York 5, N. Y.) and personal gift packages of rice, sugar and whole-wheat flour, not weighing more than 22 pounds, may be sent to the Minister, Department of Food, Madras, India, marked "Free Food Gift Parcel—Famine Relief." War Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.) and Jesuit Missions (1114 South May St., Chicago 7, Ill.) are among those distributing funds and foodstuffs in the famine areas. Whether such gifts bear American labels is of minor importance. It is what the American people do to meet the challenge of the famine in India that counts.

The General and the Shirt Salesman

THE big controversy has been focused around two men, both of them wholeheartedly devoted to the American ideal. One of the men is a professional soldier, son of a famous General, a man who from youth was prepared to lead and command, the epitome of the polished, cultured American gentleman: the West Point graduate.

The other man, who happens to be President of the United States, is a professional politician with a less awesome background. The Trumans were never a 'name' family in this country. They were farmers and small-town folk, middle-western, middle-class, middle-browed. Harry never had the opportunity to go to college. He never got to be more than a Captain in the AEF. For awhile he sold shirts and ties and underwear in a Kansas City haberdashery. He might have spent his life as an Independence lawyer or a small-town judge. But by an accident he became President of the United States, and later he was elected by the clear vote of the people.

Even today as President he remains conspicuously "ordinary" and his manner is more suggestive of the Missouri merchant than the European diplomat. His speech has more in common with Will Rogers' than Winston Churchill's. His choice of clothes, which ranges from the scrupulously natty to the carefully casual, betrays his background. His public manner lacks the polish one might look for at Oxford or West Point. His private life is almost spectacularly unspectacular. It has been said, and not without reason, that you can find five Harry Trumans in every crowded subway car. When his pictures first appeared after Roosevelt's death one writer said, "All this talk about the Common Man! And here he was Vice-President all the time."

Now there is much to be said for General MacArthur's view on the world crisis, and the General has said it, if not always persuasively, at least with great conviction. There is much to be said, too, for Mr. Truman's position. But the argument belongs on the military and political plane.

It is no argument for MacArthur's point of

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view merely to say that he is a "gentleman," stamped and sealed by birth and West Point itself, with the bearing, the grace and the vocabulary of a "gentleman," whereas Truman is a "nobody," a former shirt salesman, a man who probably has his doubts now and then about which fork to use. This is to bring the argument down to a level unworthy of American debate. It is to appeal to the snob lurking in almost every breast.

There are no "nobodies" in the United States, and Harry S. Truman is living proof of that. Appeals to social snobbery do little to serve the cause and the country to which Douglas MacArthur has given a lifetime of service, and they are merely tastelessly and disastrously beside the point when they are invoked to support his views.

Strangely enough, this kind of argument is found in the very newspapers and syndicated columns which thrive on vulgarity. Maybe not so strange. What is more vulgar than the snob's irrational appeal?

The Gilson Controversy

IN THE last few months THE COMMONWEAL has been involved in what has come to be an unfortunate international incident. It all began early in December, when Chinese Communist intervention in Korea changed the course of the war there and created a climate of opinion in this country favorable to the isolationist suggestion, made in the first of the "great debates," that the United States withdraw its forces to this continent. At this moment of great national peril, THE COMMONWEAL published an open letter from Waldemar Gurian to Etienne Gilson, the distinguished French philosopher, who had been delivering a series of lectures at the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Gurian's letter was an impassioned appeal to Professor Gilson not to spread the doctrine of neutralist isolationism in the United States. This letter reflected the anxieties of the hour. So far as Dr. Gurian and THE COMMONWEAL were concerned, the key issue of the common defense of Europe and of the West was urgent and uppermost at the time.

Unhappily, Dr. Gurian's letter gave the impression—which we later learned, after considerable investigation, to be erroneous—that Professor Gilson had stated his political views in public. On the contrary, M. Gilson had discussed these issues at Notre Dame only in small, private gatherings—in response to questions that were put to him. Moreover, M. Gilson denies that he made some of the statements attributed to him in the open letter—notably the statement to the effect that he was not returning to France because he did not care to live there under Soviet occupation. In this claim, M. Gilson has been substantiated by some of those who were present at those gatherings.

A few weeks later the open letter was taken up by the French press. Among the papers engaging in the debate were *Le Monde,* which had originally published M. Gilson's articles in favor of European neutralism, and *Le Figaro Littéraire,* which vehemently opposed M. Gilson's neutralism. There were further unfortunate repercussions in French university circles and even among members of the French Academy, of which M. Gilson is a member. The controversy was also reported in the columns of *The New Yorker.* Even as late as April 28 the English *New Statesman and Nation* accused THE COMMONWEAL of conducting a smear campaign against Professor Gilson. Our motives in publishing the letter and our own political philosophy were also seriously misrepresented in the French press.

We believe as strongly as ever that the United States and the other free peoples of the world have got to stand together in common self-defense against further Soviet aggression. We believe that Western Europe is defensible. We believe that M. Gilson and the many Europeans who agree with him have been mistaken in upholding European neutralism.

But we regret that his private remarks (as we have said, M. Gilson denies that some of them were made at all) were referred to in these pages as if they had been public utterances. We regret our failure to ascertain their public or private character and to check with first-hand witnesses the precise context of M. Gilson's remarks on this crucial question. For these failures on our part, we sincerely apologize to Professor Gilson.

In addition to making this heartfelt apology and to reiterating our belief in the need for Atlantic unity for self-defense, we seek by this statement to bring the controversy to a close. In the interests of the common cause we are all trying to serve, we earnestly hope for a reconciliation between Professor Gurian and Professor Gilson and for an end to the bitterness that the controversy has aroused.

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The State and Human Freedom

Does citizenship limit or enlarge the liberty of men?

By EUGENE J. McCARTHY

WHEN one undertakes to analyze the problem of the state and human rights, he does so with a sense of impending conflict. This expectation of conflict has real historical justification, for in this century, and more immediately in this generation, the power of the state, ruthless, self-justifying, without regard for the rights of persons, or for other societies, such as the Church and the family, has been forcefully demonstrated. We have learned a lesson which we should not soon forget. We have learned that we must at all times be alert to the danger of the intrusion of the state into areas of culture, and into areas in the social and private life of man, which are beyond the authority of the state.

This alertness and vigilance should not, however, lead us to accept unsound theories concerning the origin, nature, purposes and functions of the state. If we do not properly understand the state, we cannot determine when it is acting in order and when it is out of order.

American political thought has been strongly influenced by an erroneous, pessimistic concept of the nature and function of the state. Thomas Paine gave the first native expression to this viewpoint about the time that the Declaration of Independence was drawn. Then he wrote these words: "Government like dress is the badge of lost innocence. The palaces of kings are built upon the ruins of the bowers of Paradise." And again: "Were the impulses of conscience clearly and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other law giver." His thought is in the tradition of Hobbes, who held that man is driven by reckless pursuit of selfish interests and that government is simply a contractual substitute, a state of affairs in which man lived in continuous fear of attack and death. The state, then, according to this pessimistic theory, arises from the evil or depraved nature of man, and moreover this evil and depraved nature is the lasting justification of the state.

It is important to note that this unsound theory of the state has its theological element. The erroneous doctrine that original sin has utterly destroyed human nature buttresses the false philosophical concept. This point of view on the state has been expressed recently by two political writers, one a Protestant, Dr. A. Kuypers, a leader in the Dutch Protestant anti-Revolutionary party, and the other, a Catholic, Dr. Clarence Manion, Dean of the College of Law of the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Kuypers explains the state in these words: "The state is like a surgical bandage, the abnormal. The state exists for the sake of sin."

Dr. Manion, in his book *The Key To Peace,* refers to the state or government as a necessary evil and makes this statement: "In a community of saints the Moral Law would be the only law needed to provide such a community with perfect peace, complete order and universal justice. It is only when such a community is invaded by amoral and immoral people, or when some of the saints fall from grace, that man-made regulations are required to hold the immoral or amoral elements in line."

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OF COURSE the state does have a function which is the result of the disorder in human nature, the consequence of the fact of evil. The state must defend human society from the most concrete and obvious forms of evil or injustice. This social evil is expressed in three general forms, or at three levels: at the international level, when one nation seeks to destroy or seriously interfere with the national independence of another; at the civil level, when some social class or institution violates the rights of persons or of other classes or institutions in society; and at the criminal level, when an individual openly rebels against the general order by committing crime.

But this negative, protective function is not the only justification for government, that is, for the state. It is not even the fundamental one. Man needs the state, and this need is not the consequence of natural depravity, nor of the fall of Adam, nor original sin. Neither does it depend on the relative goodness or badness of the mass of mankind at any particular period of history. Man's need for the state rests in his rational, social nature. This need would remain even though man had never fallen. It remains also

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for man redeemed by grace, for grace does not destroy nature, or make essential social or political institutions, such as the family and the state, unnecessary. A society of saints would need positive, human law. As a simple example, the moral law would not settle for a community of saints, if they drove automobiles, the problem of whether they would pass on the right or on the left side of the road.

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IN ADDITION to the negative function of preventing and counteracting evil, the state has a positive function, namely, to assist man in the pursuit of happiness in the temporal order. This does not mean that the state is indifferent to the absolute, or ultimate end of man, which the state must take into account, but simply that its immediate and direct purpose is the temporal good of man, the human good, that which is generally referred to as the common good.

This common good includes three principal categories of human good things:

First, those material goods which are necessary to maintain life and necessary as material helps to intellectual and moral and spiritual growth.

Second, those intellectual goods, the knowledge and culture of the mind, which liberate man from ignorance and false fear.

Third, moral good, or moral goodness, the mastery of self, the possession of those virtues, which in the limited order of temporal life are the highest goal, the good life described and sought after by the Greek philosophers.

It is clear then that the state has a positive function, unrelated to the evil and division in man. Two points need to be emphasized: first, that the purpose of the state is to assist man; and second, that the direct function of the state is in the *temporal* order. It follows, of course, that the state, as an agency having responsibility for advancing the common good, has authority and the right to use suitable means, i.e. political power. This does not mean that the individual person, or other institutions in society, must yield before every demand of the state, or give unquestioning obedience.

There are two general conditions under which obedience may be withheld. First, in the event that the state extends its authority into a field of life which does not properly belong to it, if it usurps the authority of the Church, of the family, or of some other social institution, or if it trespasses upon areas reserved for individual personal decision. The entrance of the state into such an area is not in itself evidence of usurpation. Often it is action made necessary by the abdication of responsibility or the abuse of authority by other governmental authorities or other social institutions, by the economic societies, the professional societies, the family, or even the Church.

Second, obedience may be withheld in the event that the state, acting in its proper sphere, orders that which is contrary to right reason. To demand unquestioning obedience pre-supposes an authority which possesses full truth. Human authority cannot claim such full possession of truth, and human authority, expressing itself in the state, can demand only rational obedience.

Through these two reservations, the autonomy of social institutions other than the state is preserved, and the dignity, responsibility and integrity of the human person protected.

This, then, is the area of conflict. We are faced with the problem of reconciling freedom and authority, of striking a balance between personal liberty and the demands of the common good. We are here concerned with particular decisions of legal justice which must be made in the light of prevailing circumstances. There will be in every real historical case, a kind of no-man's land in which there will be what in modern military terminology is called a "fluid line."

Even though this line is "fluid" and historically changing, it is important that we try to draw it with whatever measure of certainty or accuracy possible. The demands of the common good must be met. Yet human freedom must be protected. As we proceed from a lower order of human goods to a higher one, our guard must be proportionately strengthened.

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THIS does not mean that we can be indifferent to state intervention at the material level. Security and freedom are not, as some hold, indivisible. It is, of course, not possible to have full freedom without a measure of economic security, but it is possible to have economic security without freedom. However, intervention by the state at the economic level is ordinarily less dangerous to human freedom. The breaking up of large estates and the distribution of the land among peasants, or the imposition of a graduated income tax need not be cause for alarm. Yet, within recent years, the greatest cry has been raised over state intervention precisely at the economic or material level, while freedom at the higher levels of intellectual and spiritual life has been yielded with scarcely any protest.

The horrible thing about modern totalitarian states has not been the economic controls they have imposed, but rather their domination of the intellectual, moral and spiritual life of their subjects. The essence of totalitarianism is its control of the whole man. Such a state does not necessarily seek equality among all of its subjects, but only such limited and specialized physical, intellectual, or moral development of each member as

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serves the rightful purpose of the state.

It is frightening to consider the reality of a state setting the pattern and the limit of the intellectual development of its subject. Yet this is exactly what the totalitarian state attempts. Every aspect of human life is made political.

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IT IS NOT that the intellectual and moral and spiritual life of man is of no concern to the state. The state does have responsibility, and therefore, authority in each of these fields. But it is an authority which must be circumscribed and exercised most carefully.

At the intellectual level, the state has the right to restrain an individual or group which in the exercise of freedom of inquiry or of expression seriously interferes with the rights of others to pursue and possess truth. Thus the state can, in the interest of the common good, suppress error which is subversive of that common good, i.e., the good of the human society in its temporal achievement. As an obvious example, the state would have the right to suppress the teaching of anarchy as contrary to the purpose of the state. Whether a particular government should suppress such erroneous teaching would depend on circumstances. False reports of historical events, errors in the natural sciences, in the social sciences, false philosophical teachings could, under certain conditions, be suppressed.

To say that error has no rights is, of course, true. It does not follow, however, that the man who is in error has no rights; neither does it follow that the state should suppress every idea which in the opinion of the rulers of a country is an error, whether the ruler be a monarch or a majority.

Whereas the state has the responsibility to assist its citizens to obtain intellectual goods, its power to suppress error is limited to those errors which, if they were propagated, would be clearly and directly destructive of stable political society.

In the same way the state has the right to suppress moral teaching and practices which are contrary to the common good. The United States government has forbidden the Mormon practice of bigamy as destructive of the moral stability of society. The state must not deny moral perfection. It has a positive obligation to encourage morality. Not only is it good for men to be moral, but morality is as George Washington stated "an indispensable support of political prosperity."

It is not true, however, that the state has a corresponding right to suppress all immorality. The purpose of the state, i.e. of its laws, is to secure, as Solovyev has declared, "the practical realization of a definite minimum of good" and "to do away with a certain amount of evil." Thus the law should not attempt to eliminate all evil but certain extreme forms of evil, and seek to bring about a definite minimal good, to require of all a minimum of virtue.

Man must be left free to develop in virtue. This is indisputable. To reach moral heights, men must have freedom. It is the function of the state to encourage and promote morality. It is not the function of the state to proscribe all immorality by law, but only the extreme forms, and those which interfere with the security of others and stability of society.

When we come to consider religious and moral teachings beyond what is dictated by natural law, or attainable by natural reason, when we come to consider questions of revealed truth, of faith, and of supernatural perfection, the right of the state to determine and to decide and to suppress error no longer prevails. The right of freedom of religion holds the field.

And so the proposition that a Catholic majority could rightfully suppress a Protestant or other religious minority, which was teaching nothing likely to subvert the temporal common good, is untenable. In the same way, the argument that a Protestant or other religious majority group could rightfully proscribe or interfere with the religious freedom of Catholics is also untenable. There is great danger of rendering to God the things that are Caesar's, namely, political authority and political power, just as there is danger in rendering to Caesar the things that are God's, absolute obedience and worship.

The state does not, then, have the right or the responsibility to impose the true faith upon all of its subjects. It should encourage and aid, to the extent possible, all its subjects either in their own activities or through the instrumentality of other institutions, to advance in spiritual perfection. This it can do, first, by avoiding unwarranted interference, and second, by positive aid without dictation or discrimination.

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IN THE 20th Century the state has been, in historical reality, a great threat to human freedom. The temptation is to condemn the state, to accept the idea that it is either evil in itself, in which case we must make unceasing war upon it, or the notion that it is the consequent of evil, which we must tolerate as we do pain and sickness. We must not succumb to the temptation of the age to reject the natural, as in centuries past the supernatural was rejected. What is called for, rather, is a re-examination, distinction, and re-ordination. We must, as Jacques Maritain has urged, enter the national fabric of our times, accept the challenge of the day, and undertake to purify the means by which man is perfected.

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SO THEY TELL ME

Labor: the Counterrevolution

THE artist is always more perceptive than the historian, for he knows that there are facts of life which rebuke evidence. The artist knows that the life of man is complex, and that the institutions he puts together escape a description that relies wholly on documents. The things men say and the things that they write have a way of becoming different from the intention of the authors. So it is with their institutions. This, long ago, was known to Euripides:

> And the thing man looks for cometh not,
> And a path is there which no man wrought;
> So it hath endeth here.

Those lines have always seemed to me among the most humbling of man's memorial possessions. But they do not stop men from being fascinated by permanent "solutions." They do not prevent them from preaching universal plans, offered as universal Salvarsans. General MacArthur is unwilling to make distinctions about his argument with the President. He must have it his way —or no way. Aneurin Bevan will have it his way, or no way. With vituperation he asks his party: "What answer will you have when the vandals"—read Conservatives—"come and sit here?"

Whenever I hear words like that, or observe positions firmly and irrevocably taken, I think of all the critics and haters of the labor movement I have heard and read.

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FOR this kind of people, if they will be patient, and will quietly read, there is an extraordinary answer. A man of rich and varied background and experience has written a book he calls *A Philosophy of The Labor Movement* (Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75). Some idea of the book's character is found in its opening sentence. It is this: "Trade-unionism is the conservative movement of our time." That sentence is not as startling as the beginning of Rousseau's *Social Contract,* or of the *Communist Manifesto;* but it contains a good deal more sense. Moreover, Frank Tannenbaum, its author, demonstrates that thesis. At least, he proves it for me.

It is true that Mr. Tannenbaum is an historian, but he is sufficiently an artist to have rich insights, make moral judgments, to see that our labor movement did not set out to do all the things that it has done. He is sufficiently an artist to speak of the industrial revolution as the destruction of man's symbolic universe which had "patterned the ways of men" across the middle ages. Whether or not it set out consciously to do it, what trade-unionism has done is to rebuild a pattern of living and of symbolism, and meaning for men: It has endowed the lives of the men in it with ethical character. It is, therefore, a moral exercise in modern history, an act of moral restoration. It has conserved ancient values. It has made its members free, because it has added to their moral participating responsibility in their jobs, and in their lives. That is the essence of Professor Tannenbaum's case. Thus he can write of our labor movement: "it is the counterrevolution."

What it has done, according to him, is to "repudiate the heritage that stems from the French Revolution and from English liberalism." Obviously, it has rejected Marxism. It has been planless, and directionless. It has, if you would, been pragmatic.

Mr. Tannenbaum, in a brillant chapter called "Trade Unionism and the Utopians," attacks, somewhat unfairly, the intellectuals for failing to grasp the place and meaning of the labor movement in our society. But that the "utopians"—the Socialists and the Communists—tried, and failed, to capture our labor movement is true. As he puts it: "The Socialists and Communists operate with general ideas, and are given over to large plans for the establishment of social 'harmony,' but the trade-union movement seemed to have no rational basis. It lacked a doctrinal foundation. It had no theory, and it offered no explanation of the beginning and the end of things. It was as perplexing and as self-renewing as life itself, and it was internally contradictory. It had no sense of direction. Its arguments—if so they could be called—were sentimental and emotional. It appealed to values the revolutionists repudiated, and, worst of all, it merely sought to improve the position of the workers here and now."

Thus the Socialists were baffled by it; and the Communists hated it—and still do. What ought to be learned from this book, by those who still hate our labor movement, and who are not Communists, is its essential American, historical character, its restorative character. If they cannot learn it here I know not what to prescribe. For this is the first book to deal, so overtly, with the labor movement as a society, with its meaning in wholly moral terms. Mr. Tannenbaum can say, for example, that "trade-unionism has returned to the worker a sense of identity within a moral universe." Perhaps other men have written about the movement like that. I do not know of any. If the function of the artist, as well as the historian, is to explain us significantly to ourselves, Frank Tannenbaum has a right to both titles.

This is not to say that his vision of realities is impaired: it is to say that it is not. He suffers none of the moral ambivalence of many of our liberals in respect of the labor movement. He does no find it impossible to admit that labor, too, is a monopoly. "The growing monopoly of capital is faced by the growing monopoly of labor." He records that, as in all monopoly, the freedom of the individual worker is submerged. He notes the fact that "both labor and capital, when given the choice, have 'escaped from freedom' and bartered away their privileges for the hope of security."

In his chapter called "Contract Versus Status," Mr. Tannenbaum writes: "Without intent or plan, the trade-union movement is integrating the workers into what

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in effect amounts to a series of separate social orders. It it re-creating a society based upon status and destroying the one we have known in our time—a society based upon contract."

Whereas it is the purpose and intention of the "utopian" to manipulate human beings, and to use the trade union as an instrument for that manipulation, what labor people are interested in is defining what Mr. Tannenbaum calls a "family quarrel" between labor and industry. It is because the industrial revolution created a "freedom" which was wholly myth that a society by contract gave—or is giving—way to a society of status. Knowing and saying this, Mr. Tannenbaum can say that "by its mere existence the collective labor agreement is a denial of the older concept of free labor. The collective agreement is the substance out of which a society of status is being constructed brick by brick, stone by stone." In consequence, he sees the society of status opposed to the planned society. And he thinks it possible that the centrifugal forces embodied in trade-unionism may make the welfare state unnecessary and impossible. If the trade-union defeats the welfare state, it shall, indeed, have proved itself the counterrevolution.

To say that the corporation has exercised power, and that ownership has been without participating moral responsibility in industry is not to startle many of us. But to say it, is to say what is required: it is to describe a fact. Not to be aware of it is to miss the point of Mr. Tannenbaum's that the corporation must play a moral role in society, as well as an economic one. That, among other things, the challenge which the labor movement has made, is making, to management is a moral one; that through its challenge a moral function may be acquired by the corporation is a fact. Mr. Tannenbaum thinks that it is, perhaps, only through labor's challenge that the values of our democratic society will be saved, along with our contemporary industrial system.

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IT IS his belief that the labor force and the corporation must become a single, cohesive force. His ideas about the way in which this corporate group may be fused will produce doubt in many minds. It elicits some skepticism in my own.

In effect he is arguing that our mobile labor force was, in part, the consequence of a lack of investment—moral or financial—in industry. Where there is no moral commitment there is no responsibility. Thus he argues that the unions invest their accumulative funds in industry, and acquire expanding rights of ownership in industry.

That labor has so much money as to make such serious difference, I do not know. Whether such investment would be good, have the results Mr. Tannenbaum foresees, I do not know. It does not lessen the great value of this book. It does not touch, necessarily, the conviction of Mr. Tannenbaum—and of myself—that "the trade-union is the real alternative to the authoritarian state. The trade-union *is* our modern 'society,' the only true society that industrialism has fostered."

FRANCIS DOWNING.

FROM ITALY

A New Life for Old Calabria

ANY morning early, that is at about four or five o'clock, go to any railway junction south or west of Naples in the migratory season. You will see there men sleeping on the floor, in the porches and the halls, surrounded by packages wrapped in paper or oil-cloth or sacking. These sleeping figures are the sons of country folk on their way to make their fortune in the world, the first step being to some big city in northern Italy. Each has collected, in these packages, whatever he can—olives, or beans, or fruit, or fowl—and with the money he will get for them he will buy umbrellas, ties, basques, handkerchiefs, and presently appear in the streets as a licensed hawker. He may have no more to sell than a few postcards or a leaky fountain-pen, and if he approaches you secretively in Naples or Milan or Rome it means that he has not even enough money to pay for his hawker's license.

These traveling peddlers are the surplus of the south, moving always northward, making the populated towns still more populous, diluting the moral and cultural quality of the north, its perpetually renewed *Lumpenproletariat.* When they prosper, as they sometimes do, they edge out somebody of an older stock. "Ah!" an old-time businessman once sighed to me in Milan. "In my boyhood Milan was still the Milan of Stendhal. We were proud of our city, proud of its traditions, of its architecture, its culture. Now it is not the same. We are not the same people."

But these intruders from Calabria, and Lucania, or Apulia might well cry: "Where else are we to go? How else are we to live?" It would be foolish for us to reply, "Why can't you stay on the land?" It would be foolish because almost exactly half of the workers of Italy are already on the land. They work hard. The amount of land in Italy that is tilled is about the fourth highest in Europe: forty-two per cent of the total surface, which includes rock, rivers, towns, barren soil, everything. The Italians work as hard as that because they have to. There are too many Italians in Italy.

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IT IS NOT surprising that Italians bitterly resent being deprived of colonies, especially by races who have carved up Africa between themselves. "The joke of it is," an Italian said to me, "that it is the British and the French who first encouraged us to get into Africa.

SEAN O'FAOLAIN, Irish short story writer and journalist, is the author of A Summer in Italy.

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You see, when the Suez Canal was opened and made the Mediterranean a modern ocean, the Rubatino Shipping Company in Genoa built a port at Assab and then sold it to our Government. The British raised no objection then: they were watching French influences at that time. That was the period when we took Massowa and had dreams of taking all Ethiopia. But we were a young, raw country and our army was raw, and we were whacked, much as Gordon was whacked by the Mahdi in the Sudan. However, we managed to hang on to Eritrea. In 1882 when the British proposed to annex Egypt they asked us to collaborate. We said, No, thank you. We'd had our medicine. Why did we go freely into Libya? Because the French wanted to go into Morocco and could not object to our going into Libya. Nobody minded, then. But now? We are all for morality nowadays!"

That conversation took place in the Arcade in Naples. As he talked I watched a boy sidling between the tables trying to sell a (so-called) Parker 51 pen. Afterwards I went off and bought the history-book they use in the schools. It more or less teaches the same narrative. And there were population figures in it: 22,000,000 Italians in Italy in 1861; after the last war, 45,000,000. That is why Naples is so poor, and Calabria is so poor. Though the real horror of Naples is that, after wandering around for a few days among the foul stews of Santa Chiara or the miserable lanes about Pizzofalcone, blinded by pity, the heart begins to put on an epidermis and one ends by finding it all, in sheer self-defense or in sheer despair or in sheer cowardice, beautifully, hopelessly picturesque. "And anyway," one shrugs, "there's nothing anybody can do about it."

I suppose it is only Americans, with their youthful self-assurance, their young confidence that there is nothing than cannot be solved, who would have dared to breeze in on this problem. For the last year and a half they have been pouring millions upon millions of lire into the south, where the rot starts: money to reclaim the land, that is to get it ploughed three feet deep where for centuries it had been merely hoed three centimeters down by oxen and old wooden ploughshares; money to get it manured, irrigated, planted, cleared; all the time tactfully pressing and pressing the Italian Government to force the landowners to sell out the land to the land-starved peasantry who can cultivate it intensively. Because five per cent of the landlords have been in possession of fifty per cent of the land.

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FOR the moment the center of this immense social change is Crotone, some 350 miles southwest of Naples, on the other side of Italy, on the Ionian Sea. This Crotone of New Calabria has changed mightily since Norman Douglas gave such an appealing picture of it some thirty-five years ago in *Old Calabria.* Then, it was a pleasant little seaport of some 8,000 people, where, of a summer evening, he could stroll sedately along the Boulevard Margherita to view what he called "the rank and fashion" emerging from their palaces. He could dine to his entire satisfaction, and sit afterwards in the open at a marble-topped table alternating good Neapolitan cigars with the excellent ices of Crotone, and then round off a heavy day with a bottle of *vino de Ciro* —"purest nectar."

Alas, "rank and fashion" indeed! The place now smells of hay, guano and petrol, having quadrupled its population in twenty years, thanks to the arrival of electric power. The main piazza is black all day long with idlers. One has to crush into a crowded bar to have —one can hardly say to enjoy—a coffee or a drink. Buildings have gone up with a rush in that phoney style of pompous architecture that consists of thin sheets of fake marble pasted on mass-concrete, and all of it plastered over with peeling posters. The Italians aptly call this new Crotone *le far ouest.* There are still palaces up on the hill and three *barones* in the telephone directory, but when I went up there to call on one of them I realized for about the hundredth time that *palazzo* in the south of Italy is nine cases out of ten Italian for a tenement. The *barone* was not there. I do not think he had been there for years. His land agent was not there. There was nothing of the least interest there except a broken-down car, a rickety perambulator sheltering under a noble archway, and the usual fruity smell.

I suppose the landowners would blame industry for this vulgarization of a once pleasant town. But that is not what is responsible for the look of Crotone today. It is more like a boy who has shot up so suddenly that he has outgrown his clothes and his strength. After all, no town can grow faster than its customers. The strength of a town depends on its hinterland and the unpleasing nature of the change that has come over Crotone is a symptom of the neglect of the hinterland by the landowners. If they had developed the land of Calabria, its towns would have kept natural pace with the prosperity of the country.

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IN the high summer, the Great Sila is at its best. Then the bare Ethiopian beauty of this land creeps slowly into one's senses, like its own peculiar animal smell; less a smell than a scent; and yet not a scent, either; something more like a musk, as if vegetation were rotting. Douglas attributed it to the smell of the dried cistus plant. To live here for a little while must be like falling in love with the desert. In the summer one thinks of some of the more deserted reaches of the Mississippi. The distant villages peaked against white clouds. The lonely river trickling over the hot gravel. And one will not have met a soul for an hour, except, perhaps, a shepherd-boy lying on the ground in the middle of his lean flock. But the best—indeed, the only effective—way to explore this part of Calabria is in a jeep, plunging and tearing through the *macchia,* up and down in the drying mud, a trackless place. I shall never forget the enthusiasm of the young engineer who drove me here, to see how they had cleared the land hectare by hectare, and the good land they had uncovered, as he pointed to the long wood on our left flank, the Barone Gaulucci's hunt-

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ing preserve, and said, *"Quello bosco e stupenduoso!"* A hunting preserve is the only kind of wood one does come across all the way from Sosenza to Crotone, apart from a couple of fine government plantations.

But, still, there are some changes, promises of the many which are coming, and if any traveller of another generation wishes to see this Calabria as it was in his day—which is to say as it has been for centuries—he will need to come quickly. He will find the Neto banked up in concrete; he will find irrigation ditches are being dug; he will find great new roads cut through the wilderness; he will find the *macchia* is being cleared hectare by hectare, the land is being churned up by teams of Fiat tractors; plot by plot being handed over to the peasants. And, if he goes to Rome, he can examine the blueprints of farmhouses, even of little clusters of hamlets, like Swiss chalets, that in three years will begin to scatter life over the desert. If war does not come to put a stop to it all, in three years the Great Sila plateau will be divided and planted and begin to pay "under new management"—I mean under a new breed of small peasant proprietors. But it will take ten years before the whole proposed scheme of land-reclamation and land-division is finally accomplished.

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I BELIEVE that, if there is not a war, all this will happen, but not many people really believe it except the Italian engineers and land-experts, men like Dr. Cagliotti of Rome University, one of the chief advisers to the Government on land reform, and men like Rossi Doria of Naples, and Buri, and Caputi, and their scores of assistants and colleagues, who are literally killing themselves to get the thing through: and the Americans. They all have the slightly dotty look of idealists. As for the peasants, they hope. The Fascist old-guard believe that if it does happen it will fail like every other scheme of its kind, and that in the end it will all fall back into the hands of the old landowners like a ripe apple from a tree.

What is the effect of all this on the politics of the peasants? I asked a man near Petilia Policastro, where there were riots last autumn and peasants were shot for seizing land: "Do you really believe in Communism?" At first he turned up the back of his hand and waggled it—the Italian gesture for "So-so" or "This way and that way;" but after a while he came clean. He said: "No, I do not believe in Communism—but it is necessary." Meaning that he was glad of Communist pressure on the Government; by which he implied that if only somebody gave him land—and he did not care who—his interest in politics would cease.

If it all does go through it will change the whole face of southern Italy, and affect even northern Italy. Industrial towns, perhaps even industrial cities, will rise up. But it will take a long, long time. Obviously, you cannot have industries until you have markets, and you cannot have markets until you have people with money to spend in them.

SEAN O'FAOLAIN.

The Stage

THE LITTLE BLUE LIGHT

EDMUND WILSON begins his play by projecting us into the not too distant future, when American liberalism shall be all but defeated at the hands of pressure groups—Communists, Sons of Peter, and American Elite-ists—and when the man who believes in 'decency,' free thought, and free speech must either capitulate or be destroyed. That Mr. Wilson's fears for the American future are well grounded, I have no doubt; that his analysis of the process by which the American disintegration may take place is a cogent one, I am also convinced; that he has got his particular villains, or even his particular virtues, right, I am not so sure; and that he has expressed himself in the wooziest and most sterile dramatic terms within recent memory, I am dead certain.

An uneasy compound of "Heartbreak House," "Hotel Universe," and "Captain Video," the play is without clarity or coherence. Its action takes place in the home of a liberal editor who is determined that his magazine shall continue to present independent opinion on the issues of the day. So far, so good. The editor, though stock, is both clear and sympathetic. He is, however, married to a woman who is enamored of his secretary, opposed to childbearing, terrified of being reminded of her parents' violent deaths, inclined to turn her husband into a father image, secretly involved in a new and still more powerful pressure group, apparently cohabiting with a vaguely identified cabaret owner, and alternately willing and not willing to kill her husband. What all this is intended to add up to, I cannot say; nor could I ever say, from moment to moment during the performance or even at its conclusion, just what the girl's attitude toward her husband, or toward the issues of the play, was meant to be. The editor is otherwise surrounded by three male associates: a secretary who deserts him for the latest pressure group, presumably because the editor's wife once stood him up on a date; a homosexual writer of horror stories who himself has some kind of *mother* fixation, and who symbolizes—or is symbolized by—the self-perpetuating and, I guess, evil reproductive processes of the hydrangea; and an obviously symbolic gardener in a white wig whose accent varies from Italian to Irish to Scotch, who intimates from time to time that he knows what is the matter with everybody in the play, but who was entirely successful in keeping his well-guarded secret from me. As I say, I knew his last character to be symbolic; but when, at eleven o'clock and alone on the stage in a spotlight, he turned out to be the Wandering Jew, you could have knocked me over with a cosmic ray. Since all of the other characters on stage had already been knocked over by something resembling a cosmic ray, this is perhaps an inadequate expression of my surprise. At any rate, surprise was quickly overtaken

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by confusion as Ahasuerus went on to explain that the 'little blue light' of the title was really the star of hate. So far as I had been able to follow the dramatic action at all, it had seemed to me to deal not so much with hate as with greed, presumption, and irresponsibility; but, then, I cannot pretend to have grasped Mr. Wilson's precise intention at any point along the line. Whatever the explanation of the vague symbolism, or the vague emotional status of the principal characters, it must be said that the author has entirely failed to relate the political to the domestic situation, the concrete materials of the play to the allegorical overtones.

The chaos of Mr. Wilson's dramaturgy makes it difficult to assess the refinements of his thought. I was not able to grasp, for instance, the identity of his final and most dangerous pressure group, or to be sure that I knew the aberrant social impulse which Mr. Wilson believes will prompt its rise. In the play, this pressure group is organized by a naturalized Greek who begins by operating an employment agency, proceeds to infiltrate every social institution with his employees, and winds up controlling America in terms of stable employment. One critic has labeled this pragmatism, but it might equally have been called skepticism, or unionism, or possibly statism, or—I feel I am getting hot now—bureaucracy.

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IT SEEMS to me that Mr. Wilson's thinking is similarly vague, if not downright flabby, on the sympathetic—or liberal—side of the picture. The only word he has been able to find for his position is 'decency,' but this is a word, not a program. However, if I understand him at all, Mr. Wilson believes liberalism to be essentially programless, to be, in fact, the champion of 'freedom' against all defined 'programs.' This is no doubt why he fears Catholicism—here slightly disguised at Peterism —and includes it among his divisive pressure groups. That Catholics are sometimes guilty of vulgar and irresponsible manifestations of pressure, I am willing to admit, and I join Mr. Wilson in deploring them. But this is not what really concerns Mr. Wilson. It is the fact that Catholics inherit and sustain a precise belief that enrages him—he is not himself liberal enough to suppose that this belief may be reasonably held by intelligent men, as certain lines in the play make clear—and he is quick to equate Catholic and Communist because each holds to a specific creed for which he is willing to fight. The intellectual sloppiness of this accent on similarity and indifference to distinctions—the kind of mental process which turns Russia into a democracy because it holds elections—is bad enough; what is perhaps worse, from the point of view of salvaging liberalism, is the author's notion that old-fashioned Americanism is a matter of resisting any and all forms of positive belief. If American liberalism consists in the rigorous exclusion of *program,* it is hard to see how the Bill of Rights came to be written. And if contemporary liberalism can save itself only by repudiating every expression of precise belief, it is hard to see what attitude the 'liberal' can take toward the American Constitution. It is even possible that Mr. Wilson's brand of latter-day liberalism, in its educative effort to discourage precision of thought or tenacity of belief, has done much to undermine the possibility of faith in any program, including the American one, and helped bring about the uncertainties and insecurities of the present era, with its vulnerability to organized and irrational pressures.

The theatrical difficulties of the play do not end with its ambiguity of structure and obscurity of thought. The piece is also devoid of meaningful characterization. The nearest Mr. Wilson has come to defining any one of his figures is in equipping his writer of horror stories with the more obvious homosexual traits. Mr. Wilson is belligerent in his determination to deal openly with the abnormal, but the practice of having an actor trail about the stage in a flimsy dressing-gown and make uncomfortable reference to flowers without stamen or pistil does not necessarily reveal the man beneath the mannerism, and Burgess Meredith—forced to lean heavily on posture and vocal suggestion in the absence of anything more interesting—is understandably nervous in the part. The figure of the editor is a cliché which Melvyn Douglas redeems in part with his own personal authority and skill, but which the author has himself been unable to conceive in any fresh or even halfway imaginative terms. The wife is, as I have said, inexplicable, and the gardener is devoid of other than abstract interest.

The language of the play is no better. The dialogue is at all times literary, rather than dramatic, dialogue, and the actors—though they had been playing it for a week when I saw it—were still fumbling over intricate constructions which would undoubtedly have thrown Danny Kaye. Mr. Wilson is self-conscious about his inability to rise to any kind of emotional effect; when he feels the play to call for intense personal expression, he first falls back on the hornier rhetorical equivalents for feeling and then proceeds to apologize for doing so. Again and again in the play an actor will deliver himself of what is meant to be a line of highly charged emotion, only to be reprimanded immediately by another actor for indulging in such 'nostalgic clichés' and such 'moth-eaten metaphors.' The expression in indeed always moth-eaten, but the apology does not square it.

It is doubtful to me—considering the structure, the characterization, and the language of the play—that Mr. Wilson possesses any specific talent for the theatre. And when "The Little Blue Light" is placed alongside *Memoirs of Hecate County,* with its somewhat similar defects, there is considerable question whether he is well-advised to pursue creative work generally. He is a distinguished literary critic, and, as we are always saying, the critical and the creative talents are distinct and mutually exclusive abilities. The general public, however does not always succeed in believing what is always said, and it is possible that Mr. Wilson's reputation may suffer from the publicized ineptitude of his least characteristic work. If I were he, I'd quit while I was ahead. (*Closed at the* ANTA *Playhouse*)

WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

THE WALRUS SAID

READERS of that peculiar brand of story known as science fiction may consider *"The Thing from Another World"* pretty tame stuff; but since I'm more or less a newcomer to this type of yarn, I was spellbound by the movie from beginning to end. In the first place, "The Thing" has several points in its favor just as a movie: Producer Howard Hawks gathered a relatively unknown group of players to enact this extraordinary plot, and without the fanfare of expensive sets and costumes, Christian Nyby has directed them exceedingly well. Charles Lederer's script (based on John W. Campbell's story "Who Goes There?") has some bright dialogue with wisecracks that take much of the curse off of the highly imaginative goings on. I suppose I shouldn't look for too many meanings within meanings in this kind of movie, but I am curious as to why most of the wisest suggestions came from a lowly sergeant.

The Military gets drawn into the plot when the US Air Force sends a plane up to the North Pole, near where some scientists are working, to investigate an enormous flying saucer that has come out of space and landed in the frozen wastes. These men aren't too bright about the flying saucer, but when they find something that looks like a man frozen in a block of ice, they bring the whole block back to their camp. What they don't count on is that the ice will melt, and this man—or thing—will escape. It does and he does. But I shouldn't say "he" because then they discover that this thing, although walking like a man, is more vegetable than human: it has no blood or nerves; it feels no pain, pleasure or emotion. Well, I tell ya: these guys are up a creek. And when the army and the scientists start arguing as to what should be done about this killer, the excitement gets pretty tense. Addicts of typical science fiction may get a little impatient because the plot also includes a romance between the captain in charge (Kenneth Tobey) and the scientists' secretary (Margaret Sheridan), but this distraction is minor; and I assure you that most attention is paid to the thing that cannot be disposed of in any ordinary way. Whether or not you believe in a single minute of this movie, you'll find it fascinatingly fantastic.

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ANOTHER new and imaginative film that should have been equally fascinating is *"Five,"* which was produced, written and directed by Arch Oboler. It tells the story of the last five people on earth—in some distant future after mankind has gone beserk with A-bombs. But unfortunately its plot has such a curious mixture of realism and fantasy and gets so involved in personalities and symbols that the weary audience has to work overtime just trying to figure out what Mr. Oboler had in mind. It is again refreshing to see new faces in a movie, but one wishes these five newcomers hadn't been expected to play old-cliché-types in such a pretentious way. I doubt if "Five" will make you think about the future very much, but neither will it bore you: it is well acted; it has some stunning photography; and it has a lot of absorbing details. Perhaps its most interesting asset is the cliffhouse built by Frank Lloyd Wright.

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THOSE who prefer their films more solidly stacked with unadorned fact should find *"I Was a Communist for the F.B.I."* right up their alley. Through long practice Warners has got this type of movie down to perfection, and this one, though rather obvious at times, stands with the best in the semi-documentary field. It is based on the real experiences of Matt Cvetic, a definitely courageous member of the FBI who joined the Communist Party and spied with all eyes and ears open for a number of years. The Commies in the film follow the standard pattern using the techniques of divide-and-conquer, starting race riots, and insisting that their loyalty to the Party is more important than anything else, including the truth and allegiance to the US. Crane Wilber's script uses plenty of real names to give the dialogue a timely quality, and Director Gordon Douglas manages to maintain an honest, factual atmosphere without losing any of the exciting story's suspense. The situations get rather emotional when Matt (nicely portrayed by Frank Lovejoy) comes in contact with members of his family, most of whom dislike him intensely—since, of course they are not aware that his admitted Communist membership has anything to do with his secret FBI work. It is at least reassuring to know, as Matt says, that there are lots of his kind working in the Party.

★

AUDIENCES who want their movies even more factual than Hollywood at best can make them should see the hour-long compilation of newsreel clips made up by 20th Century-Fox on the *"Kefauver Crime Investigation."* Those who saw all these proceedings on television will miss the sense of immediacy; furthermore the TV cameras panned across the room more and were more successful than the newsreels in making you feel as if you were actually present. However there is an advantage in seeing so many of the participants at one viewing and there is plenty of food for thought as you watch the various witnesses testifying—or refusing to speak up. You also become aware, especially if you saw the session on TV, how newsreels can change the emphasis through editing. In this film, Virginia Hill obviously steals the show, and strangely enough Tobey seems more important than Kefauver. (This is partly due to the fact that the clash between Tobey and O'Dwyer is much more exciting than anything Hollywood ever thinks up.) Of course the conclusion still belongs to Kefauver—or rather to the various communities to whom he is speaking.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Unspoken Ism

By JOHN COGLEY

THE title of Blanshard's second variation on a single theme (*Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power. Paul Blanshard. Beacon.* $3.50) is somewhat misleading. The book might better have been called *Communism, Secularism and Catholicism.* The words "Catholic Power" are a semantic device. They do for Mr. Blanshard what "Romanism" did for an earlier generation of nativists.

As one reads the book it becomes increasingly clear that when the author uses the word "democracy" it is not only a political attitude or form of government he has in mind. Blanshard has exalted what he chooses to call Democracy but is properly known as dynamic Secularism, to the status of a pseudo-religion. He apparently conceives of American democracy as the political incarnation of his secularist philosophy; thus Catholic teaching on Natural Law, objective morality, Revelation, asceticism, etc., is patently "un-American." Citizens who can not, or do not, conform to the Blanshard secularist ideal are not to be trusted. They may be tolerated, but, let us face it, they don't really belong.

This book is clearly an epistle from Paul the Apostle of Secularism. In characteristic style, a combination of selective scholarship and bland assertion, he here attempts to analyze two rival "religions," one genuine, one ersatz, using his own secularist faith as the standard of measurement.

Of course Communism and Catholicism end up looking very much alike.

Blanshard hammers away at the surface similarities between the rivals' claims (the genuine religion, Catholicism and the ersatz religion, Communism). He belabors their points of contact and carefully ignores the profound differences between them. He finds, for instance, that in the pseudo-religion, the infallible Dictator is the equivalent of the infallible Pope. The Party élite corresponds to the dedicated clergy and religious. The Marxist system of perverted morality is as demanding as the Catholic's Natural Law. Communist zeal is a match for Catholic apostolic fervor; both have been told to go, teach all nations. Both 'systems' (Mr. Blanshard's word) rely heavily on hierarchy and authority. Both venerate their saints and martyrs; both value asceticism, etc., etc.

★

IN A nutshell, Mr. Blanshard has discovered that Communist atheism is as uncompromising about its atheism as Catholicism is about its theism. For reasons of his own, he chooses not to discuss the basic differences between the two 'systems,' their relation to the fact of God's existence. With God, Marxism's religious posturing is monstrous; without God, Catholicism's claim on the human conscience is built on outrageous arrogance. The fact of God makes all the difference. But Mr. Blanshard says his study makes "no attempt to discuss the truth or falsehood of contemporary Christianity as religion."

That belief in God should make religious demands is one thing; that atheism should make even more staggering demands is another. But the distinction never troubles Mr. Blanshard. He is concerned only that demands are made. He condemns Communism because it conducts itself like a religion. Then he goes on to condemn Catholicism for the same reason. A neat trick.

To do this, he has to reduce both 'systems' to political terms, carefully and consistently labelling Catholicism 'Catholic Power' and the Church 'the Vatican.' Then after he does this, he asks in horror: How can a political system make these demands? How, for instance, can 'Catholic Power' dare to pass moral judgment on *our* sterilization laws, *our* divorce laws? Why, this is the kind of conduct we've come to expect from Communism! He divests the Church of religious meaning and then shudders with wrath because the Church refuses to be defrocked and continues to go about its priestly work.

Blanshard's own secularism, of its nature, makes no religious demands on its adherents; it merely demands that no religious demands be made, even by God Himself. Its leading American apostle exalts it in this book as the obvious solution to the whole religious question, especially at a time when aggressive atheism and unyielding theism are locked in mortal struggle. The choice, as Blanshard sees it, is not religion or irreligion. He demands from us, in the name of 'democracy' and under threat of our being anathematized as bad Americans, that we accept the fool-proof position of the secularist who says that religion just isn't a factor, it doesn't really matter. If we don't accept his secularist position, he asks how can we call ourselves democrats. How can a man be a good American and hold that an operation which is performed every day in American hospitals may be immoral? How can he be a good American and not believe that one religion is as good (or as bad) as another?

The Communist says, "God doesn't exist and so belief in God has no claims on you: error has no rights." The Catholic (and the believing Protestant and Jew too) says, "God does exist and He has every claim on you: truth has every right." Paul the Apostle of Secularism asks, "What is Truth?" And if you attempt an answer, he will ask how you can call yourself an American and dare to answer a question like that.

★

BLANSHARD'S first book *American Democracy and Catholic Power* was the secularist *Summa;* this second is the *Contra Gentiles.* But unlike Saint Thomas he is not always fair in describing the gentiles' actual beliefs. Here are only a few examples:

"[The Pope] has power to declare what is right or wrong by divine fiat, and simultaneous power to consign to eternal perdition any human being who defies his judgment" (page 78).

"He [the Pope] can consign human beings to hell for violation of divine law" (page 78).

"No true Catholic can agree with the doctrine of

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Church-State separation in its American constitutional form" (page 213).

". . . the conscience which denies Catholic dogma has no rights because it is in error" (page 217).

". . . priests are permitted and at times encouraged [by the Vatican] to play upon the lowest superstitions of their people" (page 235).

Catholic propaganda exalts the Pope as "essentially divine" (page 289).

". . . all human beings who deliberately reject the Catholic form of Christianity after examining its claims are doomed to eternal perdition" (page 174).

Mr. Blanshard may give the impression of scrupulous accuracy by his frequent documentation, but occasionally, as when he says: "Since then [1931] *several* popes have issued shockingly reactionary and anti-scientific pronouncements," even the reader unschooled in theology and unread in papal literature may pause.

★

THROUGHOUT this book are two assumptions: 1) that the Blanshard brand of secularism is identical with American Democracy and 2) that this secularism, if loyally adhered to, will protect the American tradition of religious liberty.

At the conclusion of his three-volume work *Church and State in the United States* Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes breaks down the American belief in religious freedom into several components. They include the following:

Freedom of conscience: Presumably Mr. Blanshard subscribes. But it is difficult to reconcile this with his demand that Catholics "recognize American marriage and divorce as valid," despite their religious belief that marriage is an indissoluble bond. "All marriages recognized by the government of the American people should be recognized by all the people," he says on page 301. This would be merely a "basic minimum for an honorable peace."

Freedom of worship: Writes Mr. Blanshard on page 56: "The . . . most authoritative catechism for American Catholics says that a government may not prohibit the Church from 'legislating in all those matters that pertain to the worship of God and the salvation of souls. If a government commands citizens to violate the laws of God, they must refuse to obey, for, according to Saint Luke, "We must obey God rather than men."' The *Catholic Encyclopedia*," Blanshard continues, "states this theory of Catholic imperialism another way . . ." Again on page 176 he is outraged because Catholic students may not in good conscience take part in an interfaith baccalaureate service.

Freedom of Association: Mr. Blanshard on page 296: "The Roman Catholic hierarchy is rightly permitted under our constitution to establish its compulsory school system, its separate marriage courts and its organs of censorship. . . . But tolerance need not imply approval of such tactics, and the evidence justifies a policy of temperate and constructive opposition."

Freedom from civil disability: Mr. Blanshard in his new book has not included a suggestion he made at Carnegie Hall on May 1, 1951, when he spoke under

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the auspices of Protestants and Others United for Separation of Church and State. He said then, and he was loudly applauded for it, that no American Catholic should be allowed to sit as a member of a public school board until he specifically repudiated the "Vatican teaching" on attendance at Catholic schools.

★

AS WITH his other book, Blanshard's second volume is copiously — but very selectively — documented. For instance, he quotes the Boston *Pilot's* comment on Secretary Matthews' Aggression for Peace speech, but there is no indication that several equally lustrous Catholic publications took strong issue with the Secretary.

Blanshard is still capable of dismissing a thorny theological question with a simple declarative sentence, but there are not quite so many outrageous examples of distortion and unscholarly sniggering here as in the master work. Sentences like the following are not so frequent: "Many of the most important doctrines such as purgatory, birth control [sic], the infallibility of the Pope, the granting of indulgences for sin [sic] in return for physical acts and monetary payments, the condemnation of all divorce, the monopoly control of marriage by priests and the coercive power of the Papacy have no clear sanction in original Christianity" (page 247). Still the pamphleteer flavor of his work is especially evident beside, for instance, a conscientious study like Dr. Stokes'. One still has to agree with Jacques Maritain's judgment on Blanshard's contribution. The interrelations between religion, specifically Catholicism, and modern democracy provide a fertile field for discussion and study, but he has disqualified himself as a responsible guide. Maritain wrote in *Man and the State*: "I am alluding to serious-minded authors, not to Mr. Paul Blanshard. His handling of the question is not worth discussion because it is simply unfair, like the rest of his book, whose criticisms, instead of clarifying matters, are constantly vitiated by biased and devious interpretations, and which confuses all issues in a slandering manner, up to ascribing to the Catholic Church 'a full-blown system of fetishism and sorcery.'"

Mr. Blanshard touches on almost every facet of Catholic life. One could not rightfully object if he conscientiously challenged the Church's theological claims, her dogmas and moral system, her discipline and prayer life; in a word, if the book were a decent counter-apologetical work. Then the Catholic would be forced to justify his religion and its claims, as the great apologists have done.

But how can one counter the attack of a man who describes the Catholic opposition to artificial birth control as the Vatican's plan for "biological penetration," and describes the canonized saints as "minor and supporting deities for the papal heavenly court," who dismisses the contemplative vocation of the ancient orders as "scarcely above the level of juvenile escapism," and says that the obligations of the marriage debt in Catholic thought is based on the Vatican's attempt to "outbreed its competitors and gain power at their expense"? These are random examples of the Blanshard approach. It is like dealing with a man who keeps asking you if you would want your sister to marry a Negro.

One cannot, of course, dismiss every criticism of Catholic life that Blanshard makes. There is plenty of parochialism, clericalism, arrogance, stupidity, ignorance, bigotry, superstition, etc., among us. But one is forced to paraphrase what Joe Louis once said about Hitler and American democracy: There ain't nothing wrong with us that Mr. Blanshard can fix. Blanshard consistently overstates, oversimplifies and overindulges his prejudice against Catholicism. His thesis that Catholicism is giant political conspiracy on a par with the Communists', is coddled at all costs, whatever the violence done to theology, history or simple fairness. Thus: "In spite of all the Pope's eloquent appeals for peace, the world-wide point of view of Catholicism on war with the Soviet Union and Communist China is more extreme than any other group." (*Vide*: the position of *l'Osservatore Romano* on the MacArthur controversy.)

But just because it is painless and superficial, Mr. Blanshard's new book may be well received—even enthusiastically received—by many of the 170,000-odd who bought his last one. *Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power* is sure to stimulate the growing anti-Catholicism in this country, despite its author's pious insistence that he would not welcome anything of the sort.

When Paul Blanshard asks his readers to study the jig-saw monster he has created and named the Catholic Church, and then requests them to go on about their business calmly, he must know he is asking for the superhuman. In more than 300 pages of the present work it is hard to find a single good word for anything even remotely connected with Catholicism. He is not quite so consistently harsh in his treatment of Communism .

Whatever his motives, Mr. Blanshard, like Father Coughlin and Gerald L. K. Smith before him, sows suspicion and hatred and disunity in American life. I should not like to be carrying his burden.

An Appeal

M. PIERRE PUJADE, Secretary General of the *Institut de Science Economique Appliquee,* of 35 Boulevard des Capucines, Paris 2e, France, has asked THE COMMONWEAL to call to the attention of its readers the plight of the wife and two children of M. Mili Mostovac and of M. Mostovac's parents:

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S. Mostovac
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M. Pujade has heard that these two households are in desperate need of food packages.

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Books

The Journals of André Gide. Volume IV 1939-1949. *Alfred A. Knopf.* $6.

IT IS HARD to resist beginning a review of the last volume of André Gide's Journals with an aphorism like, "One can forgive an author everything except his journals." But even if the temptation were checked (and it wasn't) the difficulty of knowing just what to say of the Journals still remains. Gide is Gide, and reviewers are reviewers. The obtuseness and Olympian attitudinizing of reviewers is quite humorously obvious in the present as in the past. Can, then, the critic dismiss these last journals and still not secretly feel like the valet leading poor relatives through the mansion of his recently deceased master? Of course he can. Only second-rate artists think that there is a definite cleavage between the critic and the artist, that the critic is the scavenger feeding upon the rich substance of an artists's creation.

Do such second-rate artists really believe that all criticism is second-rate work, that a first-class work of criticism is not as good as any work of art, no matter what its degree of excellence? Of course they do—second-rate artists believe that. It is only the real artist who by his work makes quite clear that the distinction between artist and critic is not quite so easy to define, that it is not the category "art" or "criticism" which assigns the writer his place, but what his writing has made of the category, which is, after all, a more or less permanent scaffolding.

All this is to say that even unexperienced and hesitant critics have the right to say that Gide's Journals can be dismissed by the average reader not out after a PH.D. in Modern French Literature. After all, the Journals were kept in order to keep Gide's pencils sharp. They are a virtuoso's practice sessions, meaningful only if one knows the composition for which they are being practiced. How can one read page after page of accounts of books read, of conversations of great, little, no importance, of changes, of adventures which are meaningful to Gide the man, not the artist?

And it is all so uneven. Out of some four hundred pages covering the years from 1939 to 1949, what stands out is the flight to Tunisia; his feeling, constant throughout the years, that morally it would have been better for France to have lost the first World War; his rather mild indignation at Germany, in spite of his anti-Vichy stand. And over and over again, an incredibly long list of books on which he comments.

Only on three points does Gide's moral concern make him write highly interesting paragraphs. One is a defense of himself against the accusation that his writings have corrupted youth and driven a particular young person to suicide; the other is a reassertion of his defense of homosexuality; and the last is a judgment on the dogmas of the Church which makes one suspect that the only Catholic theologian he ever read was Bossuet.

SERGE HUGHES.

The Soviet State and Its Inception. Harry Best. Philosophical Library. $6.

ACCORDING to the publisher's note, this new book on the Soviet Union is "based upon a personal visit to the Soviet Union, together with a rather extensive examination of what has been written on the subject." It would have been easier to state that here is another rehash of (a) English-language books on Russia based upon personal visits of *their* authors, and (b) English-language propaganda material published by Soviet agencies. To write a new book by merely excerpting a number of old books may sometimes be quite meritorious, with so much more being published than even a close student can read, and a good compendium always coming in handy, but to write such a book, the author should at least be able to write.

Unfortunately, Mr. Best seems to have little familiarity with writing, at least in the English language; while reading this book, the reviewer's thoughts, it must be admitted, wandered off continuously to the puzzling question is what language the book could be translated from, in what language the translator might be at home, and in what language the publisher might converse with his editor.

This puzzle, however, seemed the only point of interest in the book which does not contain one fact, idea or insight which has not been presented very frequently before, though probably never in such a sloppy form.

Take, for instance, this meaningful paragraph from the chapter on "Russian geography," compared with which an average high-school boy's composition seems a triumph of precise language and profound wisdom. "But the Russian spectacle," Mr. Best informs us, "has regions not only inviting, but of enchantment. In the Southern area what a storied country! What country contains so much of seductive interest to mortals—in its scenes of intriguing ancient mythology around the Black Sea and in its glamorous cities of central and southwestern Asia!" If you are a Perleman fan, you enjoy that sort of thing, but if you are offered "a sober, objective study" on the Soviet Union, as the publisher says, you feel a little lost in the lingo.

This authoritative work on the Soviet State and its inception mentions Stalin in one phrase (hidden away between parentheses like this, it supplies us with the exciting information that the "commissar of defense" is one Joseph Stalin). Trotsky is mentioned in two footnotes, with the highly debatable claim that his "plans for worldwide communism were largely abandoned in Russia; socialism was to be built up at home first." (Sic.) The political and cultural contents of the whole book

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keep steadfastly on a similar level of sloppy naiveté based on unknown third-hand sources.

A chapter purporting to report on "Russian religion" fails to say a word on the teachings of Eastern Orthodox theology; while prayers are censured as "superstition," the following, rather enigmatic description of Russian church services is presented: "As there is much to greet the eye, so there is much to greet the ear. There may be no organ to peal forth music, but what is to be likened to the rich sonorous voices of the male choirs? And who can fail to remember the stately solemn ritual and liturgy? And what of the holy days? In particular what is to be said of the gorgeous presentations at Easter?"

The author does not answer his own questions. We should like to add a couple of other questions, such as: In particular what is to be said of a pretentious book by an author who cannot write and who has nothing to say? In general what is to be said of a publisher who exploits the general interest in the vitally important subject by advertising this semi-illiterate thing as a "sober, objective study" on "something that America owes it to herself to know"?

The book costs six dollars, but you can probably gain on your investment if you select from the book any phrase you like and send it to the *New Yorker* magazine; its editors, I understand, pay five dollars apiece for gems of the kind with which this book abounds.

NORBERT MUHLEN.

Beyond East and West. John Wu. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

WE CAN be grateful to Dr. Wu in the way that many people have been grateful to St. Augustine. With candor, wit and compassion he has set down the story of a dynamic odyssey. We feel humble, as we read it, but we also feel proud, proud in the best sense of the word. We see once more that we have a right to hope. We can rely not only on the ultimate goodness of God but on His inevitable nearness as well. The human race, with all of its tantalizing diversities, is still a witness to the fact that grace endures. Even in the here and now.

Now in his early fifties, a member of the faculty of the University of Hawaii, Dr. Wu looks back upon an amazing and prodigious life. Yet, in a way, it is not looking back at all, for there is an extraordinary quality of youth about the book. Today and yesterday are as one. He is not only the young free-thinking Methodist who came to Michigan Law School as an impetuous graduate student in 1920, he is also the man who later became the President of the International Court at Shanghai, the man who was one of the authors of the new Chinese Constitution in the thirties. He is not only the convert of ten years ago, who made exquisite translations of the Psalms and the New Testament into Chinese—"weaving a Chinese tunic for Christ"

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—he is also the man who later became the Ambassador from Nationalist China to the Vatican. He is many more things: he is a poet in his own right, he is the father of thirteen children, and he is still loyal to the memory of his friend Chiang Kai-shek, to whose spiritual qualities he gives repeated emphasis.

Dr. Wu is also a warm friend of Mr. Justice Holmes. One of the most touching chapters in the book is the one which records the development of this friendship. The Judge was a man of 80 and Dr. Wu was a boy of 22 when they first met. The boy had sent the Judge an article which he had done for the *Michigan Law Review* and the Judge was as kind to Wu as he was to the long line of bright young men from Harvard who became his secretaries. In fact, he was more than kind: he was an inspiration. For, at a time when young Wu was drifting toward elegant unbelief, it was Holmes who kept challenging him to "have faith in faith." It was Holmes who held up the high ideal, who urged the boy to find a romantic affirmation in the value of effort. It was Holmes who, in later years, wrote to Wu: "If I were dying, my last words would be: have faith and pursue the unknown end."

This, of course, is not the alleged materialist who is so frequently under attack these days. But it is the Holmes whom Canon Sheehan loved. It is also the Holmes who was actually an instrument in the eventual conversion of Wu.

"It is ironical," writes Dr. Wu, "that a man who talked so much about faith should be called a sceptic. Concretely his faith was not mine, but his philosophy of faith, vague as it was, did encourage me to embrace what I could not help regarding as the true Faith."

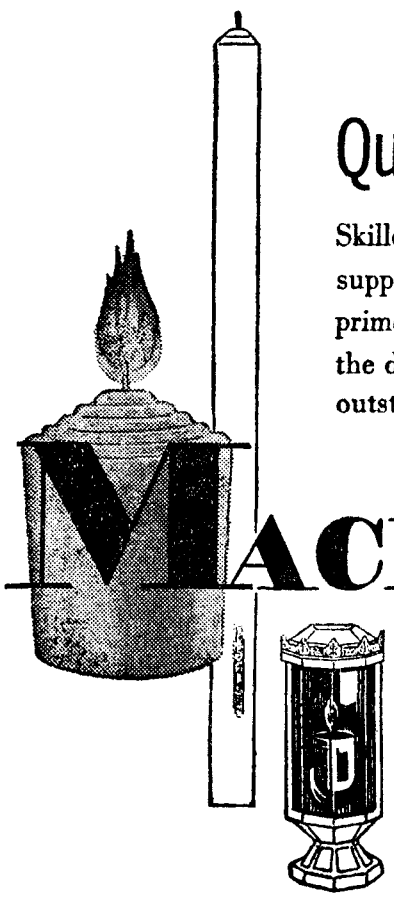
"I can not thank God enough," Dr. Wu continues, "for having given me in my youth a friend like Holmes who was as frank as he was kind. I appreciated his kindness because he was frank; and I appreciated his frankness because he was kind. In this respect, he was an unconscious Christian, as so many good Americans are."

Is it any wonder that Dr. Wu still prays for the man who talked to him so vigorously about "fire in the belly"? Of how many of us can it be said that, in our own quest for truth, we did not block or blur the vision of it which others were seeking at the same time?

There was a certain joy as well as a certain fire that passed from Holmes to Wu. This was the joy of battle, the willingness to put all of one's powers to the test in a work of some magnitude, the eagerness to follow a project through to its ultimate conclusion. And, as we note the progression of Wu's thought—from Cardinal Newman to St. Thérèse, to Papini, to William James, to Dante—we realize that Holmes did something else for his young friend. He kept his mind open.

And so it is that even today Dr. Wu can write, "In Thérèse of Lisieux can be found the heart of Buddha, the virtues of Confucius, the philosophic detachment of Lao Tse." Dr. Wu has an open heart as well as an open mind.

EMMET LAVERY.



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True Tales from the Annals of Crime and Rascality. St. Clair McKelway. Random House. $3.

THE newspaper game went to pot years ago, according to St. Clair McKelway, one of its great reporters, when the journalism school graduates took over with their trick leads and other fancy literary devices. He took refuge at the *New Yorker* where he continued to outreport and out-write the lot of them in the Annals of Crime department. These pieces, which originally appeared there, deal chiefly with a variety of attitudes toward the law displayed by its transgressors, its defenders, and the hard-to-classify—the rascals. Among the more intriguing are Wily Wilby, the good natured embezzler who beat the calculating machines out of hundreds of thousands because they could think but couldn't talk; Harry Grossman, the indefatigable and splenetic process server; Father Divine; and Mister 880, the little counterfeiter who almost drove the Secret Service crazy for ten years with his incredibly bad one-dollar bills.

McKelway is an astute guide into the fascinating alleyways that run behind our front of respectability. You may moralize about some of these tales, if you feel so inclined, but he doesn't shove you into it. If you're not entertained, however, it would be better to quit reading and take up television in earnest.

PAUL V. FARRELL.

Jeanne Jugan. Francis Trochu. Newman Press. $3.75.

THE foundress of the heroic Little Sisters of the Poor encountered the lack of understanding and other humiliations that seem to have been the lot of saintly founders of a number of modern religious orders. It is scarcely 70 years since she died; yet the work she began by taking two aged invalids into her attic lodging has spread across the globe. Msgr. Trochu is well known for his earlier biography of the Cure d'Ars.

• REVIEWERS

SERGE HUGHES teaches Modern Languages and Literature at St. John's University, Brooklyn.

NORBERT MUHLEN is an American correspondent for the Berlin monthly *Der Monat*. He contributes regularly to the *New Leader* and other journals.

EMMET LAVERY is a Broadway playwright and Hollywood screen writer. He is the author of the current film, *The First Legion*.

PAUL V. FARRELL is an editor for the Conover-Mast publications in New York.

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A Point of View VIII

Initiative of the People

ACCORDING to the pluralist principle everything in the body politic which can be brought about by particular organs or societies inferior in degree to the State and born out of the free initiative of the people ***should*** be brought about by those particular organs or societies.

Vital energy should unendingly rise from the people within the body politic. In other words, the program of the people should not be offered from above to the people, and then accepted by them; it should be the work of the people.

This means that at the very bottom, at a level far deeper than that of the political parties, the interest and initiative of the people in civic matters should begin with an awakening of common consciousness in the smallest local communities and remain constantly at work there. . . . Those activities of spontaneous growth are for the people indirect but efficacious means of supervising or controlling the democratic State. . . .

JACQUES MARITAIN in The Commonweal, February 2, 1951

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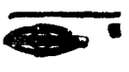

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